



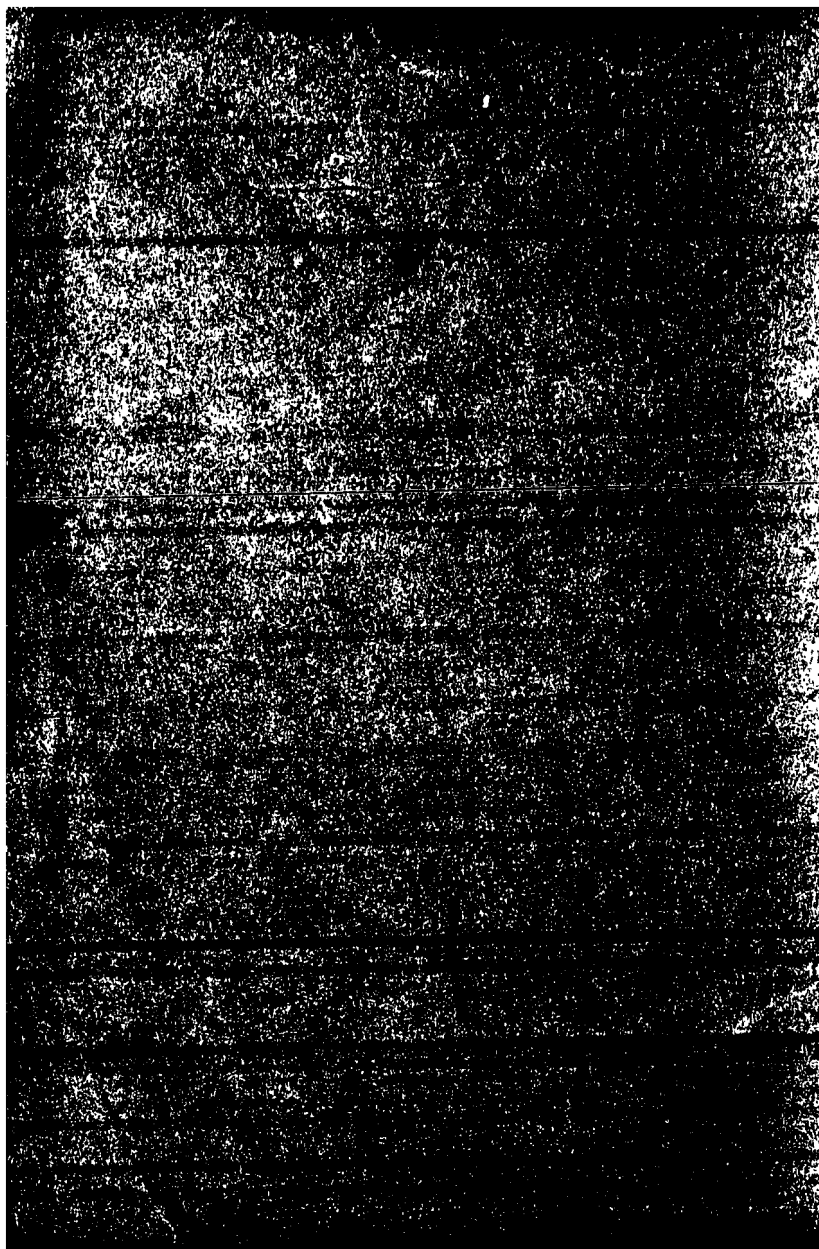
A HEALTH TO REGINA

BY

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Women's Canadian Club Historical First
Prize-Winning Essay in Regina
Contest

1927.



Compliments
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*"Success to Regina, Queen City of the
Plains."*

The first Toast; the time, nine o'clock in the morning of the Twenty-third day of August in the Year 1882; the dazzling sun and the liquid notes of unseen meadowlarks add to the glory of the summer morning, while the fragrance of wild roses, golden rod and flax perfumes the air.

The prairie sky "strewn with soft white pillows, tier on tier" canopies the scene; the long grass shakes in the sun for leagues on either hand, broken only by serpentine buffalo trails and paths where the Red-man roams at will; and—by shining rails of steel, The Canadian Pacific Railway.

Here stands the first Iron Horse, rival of the buffalo.

"Type of the modern, emblem of motion and power, pulse of the continent,
Launched o'er the prairies wide."

Here a group of Railway builders—Van Horne, Donald Smith, McIntyre, and others, "a breed whose proof is in time and deeds."

And here the Pioneers, "the Gentlemen Adventurers of the Prairies"—those who came before.

And the Indian brave, with squaw and papoose, dog and pony—in silent contemplation—the first inhabitant of the Plains;

"Pile-of-Bones" marked by a great cone-shaped mass of buffalo bones.

Judge Johnson of Montreal, proposes the Toast of the infant City, and christens it with the name suggested by Princess Louise in a moment of prophetic imagination:

"Regina"—Queen City of the Plains.

A thrill of adventure was felt from Winnipeg to Old Westminster when Lord Lorne, after touring through Northwestern Canada in 1881, painted in glowing words the beauty and resources of the great prairies whose breadths of unoccupied land were calling "Come, plow, sow and reap us."

Agriculturists sought measureless fields for tillage, merchants a mart for more profitable traffic, manufacturers an extension of the home market, and the capitalist a field for investment. So in 1882 the wild silence of the illimitable plains of the Great Lone Land was broken by the railway whistle.

Since that historic year of 1882 when a small but picturesque City of tents was established about a mile west of the present site of the City, the story of Regina has been one to fascinate. If the pioneers of eighty-two had "dip into the future and beheld the wonder that would be"—the transforming of the wilderness and the solitary places into a land where millions will carve out their destinies, what a recompense would have been theirs for hardships endured.

Regina, First Lady of the Land, Capital of Saskatchewan, the Province with the long sonorous Indian name, and with an area larger than all the Provinces together of any European country, except Russia; on its achievements the glamor of romance has

been generously shed. Upon the bald prairie trod, within the memory of living men, by the buffalo and inhabited only by the Indian, a City has been reared, a City of vast potential opportunity, but a City whose colorful history reminds us that "'tis not the Present only, the Past is also stored in thee."

Imagine the panorama spread before its founders when they reached the end of the steel in 1882—a counterpart of the Covered Wagon scenes of the moving picture, horsemen with a "six gun" swinging at the hip, the Indian, the roving gambler, the typical settler, all filled with the sense of blazing new trails.

Then following the foundation period when pioneering was the keynote, the life of the frontier had settled down upon Regina; then came the troublous days of the Louis Riel Rebellion, but when peace was restored gradually the hamlet on the prairies developed into the home-town of these pioneers—its first citizens.

The eighties were the lean hard years but in spite of hardships the prevailing ardor and enterprise helped "to lead with friendly hand toward the future" those who kept faith with this land which they found to be bathed in sweeter, rarer, healthier air than that they had left.

"New occasions teach new duties" and they sought the sure fulfilment of their

hopes by doing whate'er their hand found to do. Young and eager as their new country, they built swiftly but surely.

In 1895 Regina's first big Exhibition was held with an attendance on the opening day of 2,000—a picturesque scene; Indians from all over the North West Territories having gathered for the celebration, while the official visitors included the Governor-General, Lord Aberdeen, and Lady Aberdeen, and the Premier of Canada, Sir MacKenzie Bowell.

The years 1905 to 1909 may properly be styled the stepping-out years in Regina's history. From then until the present time the City has attained its true status. From the "corner grocery" of the pioneer days, Regina has grown into one of the largest distributing centres in the West. Thirty thousand square miles of territory look to her for their daily requirements, and her own pantry staff must be replenished also, for 40,000 inhabitants require a generous sized Cooky Jar to meet their needs, and being a hospitable hostess, provision has also to be made for her many Convention guests who throng the City from time to time.

A famous historian has said "What wonderful things are events, the least are of greater importance than the most sublime and comprehensive speculations." So as we contemplate this City of forty thousand

souls the events of the past have a new significance for us, and disagreeing with Macauley's statement that "Facts are the mere dross of history" we realize that such records are the steps of progress which have made the achievement of today possible.

On March 27th, 1883, an Order-in-Council was passed removing the Capital of the North West Territories from Battleford to Regina, and in the same year, Regina was incorporated as a town.

Regina, incorporated as a town 1883 may mean just that or may signify to us the first milestone in the history of an illustrious City begun by a little group of pioneers, the man from Ontario, the Scotsman, the Irishman, the Englishman, some of them typical "remittance men," the Frenchman, the half-breed. And even in these earliest of early days there were the pioneer women with their children. Of one of these it has been said: "She was one of the great souls who helped to keep alight the lamp of hope in the pallid, pioneer days of old Assiniboia. She showed a passionate spirit of loyalty to a land offering small promise of reward in that early day of struggle." Such was the Pioneer Mother.

In 1885, the little band of settlers were disturbed by vague rumours of an uprising among the Indians; those who were able sent their families back to the old home while

the men stayed on, but as the Rebellion became an actuality, little progress was made in settlement and not until its close and the trial and final scene in the life of Louis Riel was anything accomplished.

In July 1885, the eyes of Canada were turned on Regina where the Court had assembled for the trial of Riel with Honourable Hugh Richardson presiding and noted Counsel prosecuting and defending. "Guilty of Treason" was the verdict, and Louis Riel, the misguided French halfbreed, paid with his life in September of the same year. A tragic page in the history of this young country.

In 1903, Regina became a City, and two years later, in the now historical year of 1905, when the North West Territories were formed into two Provinces, "Regina, District of Assiniboia," was no more, but the new Province of Saskatchewan claimed the Queen City of the Plains as its first Capital City.

September 5th, 1905, was a memorable day for the new Province; Regina was the scene of the celebration of Saskatchewan's inauguration, and among the 25,000 present were many who could say as did Honourable A. E. Forget, its first Lieutenant-Governor:

"I have seen this country grow from its birth, develop during its years of infancy, progress through youth, and today with you I have the intense satisfaction of seeing it

giving birth to two fine Provinces, which will in all time take first rank, by their importance and wealth, in that galaxy of Provinces constituting the Dominion of Canada."

Greetings came from His Majesty, King Edward, and Earl Grey, Governor General of Canada, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister, gave personal messages to the thousands of school children gathered in honor of the launching of this new Saskatchewan, of whose future one had little doubt as one noted the young eager faces.

"Have the elder races halted?

"Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied
over there beyond the seas?

"We take up the task eternal, and the burden
and the lesson,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!"

Four years later Earl Grey was again the guest of the City when he laid the cornerstone for the new Parliament Buildings, the old home of the Legislative Offices having been found to be inadequate. In 1912 the first Session of Parliament was held in the Legislative Chamber of the new building, the entire conception of which was that of men who provisioned the future splendour of the Province, notably Honourable Walter Scott.

The choice of architects was made after the holding of an international competition. The building is constructed chiefly of Manitoba stone, and the lofty and dignified lines of its architecture are well preserved throughout.

Where only a few years before was a flat and featureless expanse of prairie grass with a little creek winding through shallow banks, is an artificial lake surrounded by beautiful grounds, and on its southern shores stands the stately structure as a memorial to statesmen of the past and an inspiration to the youth who shall take their places.

Here is the broadcasting station of Government activities in the Province; finance, education, health, agriculture, highways, justice—not a life in Saskatchewan but is touched in some way from this centre.

The Library holds many treasures, among them the historical table at which sat the Fathers of Confederation in 1864; its adventures are related on a tablet placed by the Provincial Government.

A striking detail of the Legislative Buildings is the triangular piece of sculpture forming the pediment over the main entrance.

The large central woman's figure is a poetic conception of the great province with the destiny of which will be intertwined the destinies of many millions. The figures on

her right call up the vision of life on the prairies when the Red-man roamed at will. Here is the Indian brave with his wife and child on one side, on the other his dog and pony, and the buffalo which was almost life itself to him.

At the left of the central figure impersonating Saskatchewan is a symbolic group crystallizing in miniature the life of the province of today. The white man, an agriculturist, as suggested by the sickle in his hand, has his wife and children near him. His ox, his plow, and some gleanings of wheat are shown, and for centuries to come, these will depict the chief industry of the Province.

In striking contrast to this conception is the Visitor's Register at the entrance to the Legislative Chamber where are the signatures of Princes, Governors, Dukes, and citizens from countries from far-flung corners of the globe—Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, China, Sweden, Norway, Australia, Greece, South America, Holland, Roumania, Malay Straits Settlement, Hungary—all are represented; no metropolis could boast a more distinguished or more varied guest list than Saskatchewan.

The bowl of plenty which had been overflowing in the years 1908 to 1912 emptied itself, and those who had been feasting a little too avidly found that Prosperity

was not freely replenishing it as in the past, but anxiety over material depression was soon replaced by a more unselfish and a deeper anxiety, for the War Drums sounded in the Homeland, and the echo resounded in the Canadian prairies, and the youngest member of the British family made reply.

"Marching to music" as it were helped during the actual days of the War, but when peace was declared, the great task of restoration put to strain the nerve and fibre of every citizen. Regina stood the test, and the many organizations formed for this purpose all testify to her spirit and energy.

On Armistice Day, November 12th, 1926, ten thousand citizens of Regina gathered to do honour to the memory of their friends who gave their lives in the War. The plain but beautiful stone cenotaph in Victoria Park bears the simple words:

"To the Glory of God and the men
of Regina who gave their lives
and service to the Great War.

"1914

1918."

Another inscription reads:

"Dedicated by the people of Regina in grateful memory of their fellow-citizens who fell in the Great War."

Two thousand were wounded and five-hundred and eighty-seven killed; the honor of placing the first of the many wreaths on the Memorial was given to the Mother of the first Regina man to give his life—Mrs. A. Hilsenteger. Another special tribute placed there was in memory of the late Acting-Sergeant Arthur Knight, Regina's only Victoria Cross hero.

Another memorial is erected in the grounds of the Parliament Buildings "To the glorious memory of the Officers, non-commissioned Officers and men of the 28th (North West) Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, who fell in the Great European War 1914-1918."

As if in reward for her faithfulness, Prosperity has begun to smile upon this western country again. What better assurance of it can Regina have than the token of faith in its future given by the Canadian Pacific Railway—Hotel Saskatchewan. Magnificent it stands, on historic ground, not far from the spot where came to a halt the first Canadian Pacific train on that memorable day in August 1882, Regina's christening day. And now on the twenty-fourth day of May in the year 1927, appropriately on the birthday of the Queen after whom Regina was named, thousands of her citizens throng to pay their respects to this great new Pile of Stones which makes memories

of the far-off "Pile of Bones" grow dim. What could be more significant than President Beatty's message to the people of Regina:

"The completion and opening of the Hotel Saskatchewan may be taken as another evidence of the progressive development of Western Canada on a sound and permanent basis; particularly is it a tribute from the Canadian Pacific Railway to the enterprise of the people of Saskatchewan, and the City of Regina, and an expression of this Company's confidence in their future."

History is a pageant, and so as the Trumpets of Jubilee sound across Canada on the First day of July in the year of grace Nineteen hundred and twenty-seven, it is fitting that Regina should unroll the curtain from the Past that the present may better be realized.

Still thrilling from the wonderful romance of the aerial flight, New York to Paris in thirty hours, we watch the faithful ox plod by with his heavy cart; some have memories of their arrival in Regina in this way. Then comes the advent of the train, and there are some here who greeted the first Iron Horse of the Canadian Pacific Railway.



And today scarcely a point in the Province of Saskatchewan that cannot be reached from its capital by direct service, both passenger and freight. Today also Regina's own representative in the Dominion House of Commons is the Minister of Railways, Honourable Charles A. Dunning, who visits his constituents after a trip over the Hudson's Bay Railway where aeroplanes are busy carrying the necessary machinery to complete the Bay route.

The honk-honk of a motor blares forth to remind us that there are over 5,500 of these in Regina to travel over the one hundred and ten miles of roadway, circling the eighty acres of Parks and Playgrounds; while three well-travelled Motor Highways beckon invitingly to take the Broad Highway to Yellowstone, to Atlantic, or Pacific; or to visit our own beauty spots at the Old Crossing, Hungry Hollow, Long Lake or Qu'Appelle.

To those who were excited spectators at their first Pow-wow and now behold the Indian become farmer, it is a transformation as great as the cultivation of the wild prairie. And here is the tent and cabin of the Pioneer followed by the Red River Cart with its precious load, a barrel of water—worth fifty cents.

Today we turn the tap in our modern dwellings and enjoy the waters of Boggy

Creek; electricity has replaced the smoky lamp, and the green wet wood.

It is a far cry from Farmer John with his "Gee-haw" to the Saskatchewan B. Sc. with his modern methods and machinery. Small wonder that for years the World's premier awards have been captured by Saskatchewan from our own billowy breadths of golden grain; and that in Regina are to be found two of the most extensive grain selling institutions in the World—the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, now united. A close rival to the grain produced is the dairying wealth of the Province, as a visit to the Saskatchewan Creamery Company's huge plant will demonstrate.

Although the Province over which Regina reigns has a reputation of being "the bread basket of the world" yet its residents have always realized that "Man cannot live by bread alone" and their pride is not only in soaring Bank Clearings, sky-rocketing Building Records, leaping Postal Revenues, the growth of which has attracted the largest Mercantile and Monetary Institutions but in one of her chiefest assets, her 10,000 school children.

From ten to ten thousand has Regina's school population grown; from a one room school to Colleges, Normal School, Collegiates, fifteen Public Schools; from the three

"R's" to Oratorical Contests, Governor-General's Medals, University Scholarships, League of Nations Groups, Hockey Teams, Poetry Prizes, Manual Training and Household Science Displays for the enlightenment of 100,000 visitors to the Saskatchewan Provincial Exhibition.

The first gesture towards the cultural was the forming of a Literary and Musical Society in 1885. Behold today—Musical Festivals, Symphony Orchestras, Chimes of Bells, Little Theatres, Notable Art Collections, Public Libraries, Horticultural Societies; to say nothing of thousands of Radio Fans "listening in" on CKCK, one of the most important stations on the continent.

From the labours of the early beloved missionaries have grown churches where each may worship according to his creed, and many are the memories dear of "the village preacher's modest mansion." To the pioneer the minister of the early days was friend, counsellor and guide, whatever his belief. "Their welfare pleas'd him and their cares distress." With but a modest church, and without organizations, within or without his flock, to aid him, he allur'd to brighter worlds, and "Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway."

Today we have churches of almost every denomination, Service Clubs, Hospitals, Red Cross, organizations for young and old, all

expressing in a different way the "old, old story."

Here, following the black-robed clergyman, is another protector, in Scarlet and Gold, one of the gallant Riders of the Plains. What better tribute to the Royal North West Mounted Police than to recall the words of Crowfoot, Chief of the Warlike Blackfeet: "They have protected us as the feathers protect the birds from the frosts of winter."

An historic site—the home of this famous Force. Their exploits in war and in peace have strengthened the early tradition of their courage and inflexible determination. Here in the early days of the "N. W. M. P." with the old brown barracks buildings, did Louis Riel pay the penalty of his life, and here it was where many men "joined up," whose names were later to stand high in the military achievements of Canada.

"Duke's son, Cook's son, son of a belted Earl"—aye ready when duty called, their presence lent a dash of colour and romance to this Prairie City in the old days, and their high spirits and gaiety were a boon through many a dreary winter and their talents were many.

When the call to arms came for the Great European War, they responded as readily as they did when the call was to South Africa. They were an honour to

their home as they were at the time of the Jubilee, the Coronation, Wembley; on parade, or in battle—always the Royal North West Mounted.

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war" and perhaps the bravest records were won by those whose part it was to patrol the prairies in the lone places of the North West.

"The pen is mightier than the sword" and from the days of Nicholas Flood Davin, Regina's first writer, whose ready wit and fiery eloquence was ever used to champion the young town, the written word has been a mighty factor in making not only Regina, but the West known to the whole world. Mary Markwell, C. J. Atkinson, Walter Scott, J. K. McInnis—these were some who translated the thoughts and the hopes of our early residents into literature.

Today we have important newspapers and many contributors to periodicals at home and abroad.

Walter Savage Landor says: "The field of history should not merely be well tilled but well peopled. Show me the statesmen who stood foremost that I may bend to them in reverence."

The advantage of a new country is that every citizen takes a pride in its up-building—Regina's honour roll contains scores of

illustrious names, women and men. Among those who held the first office in the gift of the City during the earliest years, and whose names leap first to memory are D. L. Scott (Regina's first Mayor); J. W. Smith, Robert Martin, James Grassick, Daniel Mowat, and Peter McAra. John C. Secord, Q. C., was the first representative in the Legislative Assembly.

Forever linked with Regina's early history will be the names of David Laird, Dewdney, Davin, Forget, Ross, Haultain and Scott.

Saskatchewan has been fortunate in the type of men who have held the office of Lieutenant-Governor, and the hospitality of Government House, Regina, has been extended to distinguished visitors from all parts of the World, as well as to residents of the Province.

As the pageant passes in review, its "Hats off" to the Pioneers, then greet the future with a cheer as we contemplate these new citizens of the Queen City of the Plains—children of the founders mingling with children of Hungarians, Greeks, French, Austrians, Germans, Swedes, Canadians all.

Theirs is indeed a goodly heritage—citizens of Regina—"no mean City."

"Here life takes on a glory and a strength
Of things still primal, and goes plunging on,
And what care I for time-encrusted tombs.
What care I here for all the ceaseless drip
Of tears in countries old in tragedy?

What care I here for all earth's creeds
outworn,
The dreams outlived, the hopes to ashes
turned
In that old East, 'so dark with rain and
doubt?
Here life swings glad and free and rude,
and I
Shall drink it to the full, and go content."

